

subdued merriment; for he had that prime  
 quality of a  
 joker, superficial gravity: the other was a  
 relative of the  
 family, a wealthy yeoman, middle-aged, thin,  
 and muscular. He was a bachelor, and famed for his  
 indiscriminate attachment to all who bore the name of  
 woman-  
 young or aged, clean or dirty, a lady or a  
 gipsy, it mattered not to him: all were equally admired.  
 He had  
 peopled the village green; and it was  
 remarked, that,  
 whoever was the mother, the children might  
 be recognised in an instant to belong to him. Such  
 was the strength  
 of his constitution, that, though he seldom  
 went to bed  
 sober, he retained a clear eye and a  
 stentorian voice to his  
 eightieth year, and coursed when he was  
 ninety.  
 Another of the sisterhood was Miss  
 Waldron, late of  
 Tamworth—dear, good-humoured, hearty,  
 masculine  
 Miss Waldron, who could sing a jovial song  
 like a fox-  
 hunter, and like him I had almost said toss a  
 glass: and yet  
 there was such an air of high *ton*, and such  
 intellect  
 mingled with these manners, that the  
 perfect lady was  
 not veiled for a moment—no, not when with  
 a face rosy-  
 red, and an eye beaming with mirth, she  
 would seize a  
 cup and sing "Toby Fillpot", glorying as it  
 were in her  
 own jollity.' Here, to be sure, were haunts  
 for Fielding;  
 but hardly for Apollo, And yet after a  
 century crowded  
 with the work of younger writers George  
 Crabbe still

keeps his place and his power to please.

No wonder if he was often a prosaic poet:  
the wonder  
is that, with such antecedents and  
surroundings and quali-  
ties of mind, he was a poet at all. How  
prosaic he can be,  
had better be admitted at once. Those who  
explore him  
must be prepared to drop at any moment  
into abysses of  
bathos. Again and again he invites that gibe  
of Alphonse  
Daudet at some poetaster: '(pa un poete!—  
tout au plus de  
l'infanterie montee':